

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

**SENT TO D.C.**  
4-19-2001

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name CHICAGO TELEPHONE COMPANY KEDZIE EXCHANGE

other names/site number Wilhelm K. Roetgen Elementary School

**2. Location**

street & number 17 South Homan Avenue  not for publication

city or town Chicago  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Cook code 032 zip code 60624

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. White (SHRO) 11-15-00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange  
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/  
communications facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS  
Classical Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls brick  
stone  
roof asphalt  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange  
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Communications

Social History

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

Communications, 1906-1950

Social History, 1906-1928

Architecture, 1906-1948

#### Significant Dates

1913, 1928, 1948

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Pond, Irving K. (1857-1939)

Pond, Allen B. (1858-1929)

Holabird & Roche

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange  
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property .3 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

16	441020	4636515
Zone	Easting	Northing

3 

Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

Zone	Easting	Northing

4 

Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Daniel Bluestone, Director, Historic Preservation Program

organization University of Virginia date August, 2000

street & number Campbell Hall telephone 804.924.6458

city or town Charlottesville, state VA zip code 22903

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Chicago Board of Education

street & number 1819 West Pershing Road telephone 773.535.8000

city or town Chicago state Illinois zip code 60609

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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CHICAGO TELEPHONE COMPANY KEDZIE EXCHANGE

Designed by Pond & Pond in 1906, the Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange stands just south of Chicago's Garfield Park at 17 South Homan Avenue. The Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Telephone Exchange was initially an L-shaped building, with a three-story section extending 48 feet along South Homan Avenue, and a two-story rear wing. The depth of the initial building was 95 feet. A series of subsequent building additions made by the Chicago firm of Holabird & Roche in 1913, 1928, and 1948 gave the building a rectangular plan centered upon an interior court, open to the sky. The 1913 addition raised the Homan Avenue elevation to four stories. A three-story 1928 addition, which adopted the primary compositional lines of the original building, extended the façade to the south an additional 35 feet. The building's series of additions reflected the rapid increase in the telephone company's business. The building's structure is fireproof of concrete and structural steel with an exterior façade of stone and common bond brick. Sections of the interior, which had an open floor plan, were divided into separate rooms in connection with the building's 1960s adaptive re-use as a Chicago public school. Nevertheless, the character of the original open floor plan is still evident on the third and fourth floor in the spaces used for the school's lunch room and the gymnasium. The classroom partitions are made of concrete block. Many of the building's original windows, both wood and metal frame, are still in place. The roof is a flat and constructed of asphalt. Designed in the Classical Revival style, the Kedzie Exchange has a nicely developed civic form, which made its subsequent development as a school seem particularly appropriate.

The Kedzie Exchange rises four stories to the north and three stories to the south above an English basement. The Classical Revival brick façade rises from a stone foundation; the brick pattern that has five brick courses alternate with single recessed courses gives the lower façade its rusticated appearance. A stone dentilled cornice with a diamond relief pattern on the front tops the first story from the central door to the north; a more restrained belt course extends from the door to the south across the 1928 addition. The northern half of this building extending from just south of the entrance originally rose three floors and was designed by Pond & Pond in 1906. The second and third floors are marked with the corner quoins of the original building, including the ones just to the south of the main entrance which, with the 1928 addition came to stand in the center rather than on the corner of the façade. Originally, the façade's top included a parapet wall with a crown that carried a stone bell in relief and below a plaque that stated Chicago Telephone Company set off on either side by two diamonds; these features were eliminated with the addition of the fourth floor in 1913. To the south, the building rises in three floors, which were completed in 1928 by Holabird & Roche in a style that follows the broad outlines of Pond & Pond's original design.

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The Homan Avenue façade is divided into five bays with the middle bay containing the entrance to the building with a flight of stone steps that were arranged parallel to the building's facade. Above this bay and on either end are single double hung, one-over-one windows. The two bays flanking the entrance contain a triple set of double hung one-over-one windows. The stone foundation has three half windows to either side of the entrance. The entrance's double doors are capped by a compass-headed window, and a large rounded stone arch with elaborate moldings that spring from two scrolled corbels with decorative flowers on the side, enhancing the visual prominence of the doorway. The two lighting fixtures that originally flanked the entryway are no longer in place. All the windows are capped with flat jack arches, and are marked with a stone dentil lintel on the top and a smooth stone sill on the bottom. The windows on the third floor to either side of the central quoining are connected with a projecting stone sill that was specially designed to hold flower boxes. Between each of the slightly recessed north side windows on the third and fourth floors are brick piers, which serve as a colossal order. The building was originally designed so that it could receive a later fourth floor addition. This was completed in 1913 by Holabird & Roche; repeating the earlier window treatments, continuing the quoins, extending the piers into a colossal order without capitals, and adding a decorative stone entablature that runs above the fourth story windows. The fourth floor addition required the removal of the parapet wall crown; now an elaborate flat stone cornice with projecting corbels is carried across the 1913 top of the building on the north side and a plain stone cornice projects above of the building façade's 1928 south section.

The building's north side elevation rises four floors and extends east in eight bays. Each bay is marked with a double hung one-over-one window, set with a slightly rounded arch and a stone sill. Between the first and second floor there is a plain stone stringcourse that wraps around the building. The English basement is marked with a series of eight half windows at the base of each bay. From the exterior changes in brick, the 1906 section of the building is visible; it extended east five bays on the first two floors and only two bays on the third floor. This lighter common red brick contrasts with the deep red of the finished brick on the Homan façade as well as the darker red brick of the 1928 addition. The 1913 addition added three additional bays to the east end, completing the eight bay side, and raised the height to four stories from the front elevation to the rear.

The building's rear, or east, elevation extends across six bays and it four floors high. It was completed in 1913 and creates an additional L-shaped extension to the south. The bays contain double hung, three-over-three windows set with curved arches with half windows at the foundation matching those on the north elevation. The stringcourse between the first and second floors from the north elevation across the east elevation. The third bay from the south contains a series of larger spaces that have been

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boarded, and a modern steel fire escape extends between the first and second bays at the southeast corner of the building. On the first floor below the fourth bay from the south is a large entrance that has been boarded up. Not as elaborately detailed as the Homan façade entrance, this rear entrance was added in 1913 addition as a secondary entrance to the new section of the building.

The south façade is the building's most visually varied elevation. From the west proceeding to the east the building rises three floors in three bays, then rises two stories in two bays and finally rises four floors in two bays. These sections correlate to the different building campaigns, dating, from west to east, to 1928, 1948 and 1913. The elevation is integrated together through the use of the stringcourse between the first and second stories. On the 1928 section the bays are composed of double hung, three-over-three windows with a flat jack arch and projecting lower stone sills. The 1948 section contains one bay with double hung, one-over-one windows with a flat jack arch and small lower stone sills, and a second bay with a doors on both floors. On the exterior connecting these doors is a modern steel fire escape that extends from the roof to the ground. The 1913 section is two bays wide and has double-hung, three-over-three windows set with curved jack arches and stone sills. As with the north and east sides of the building there is limited decorative treatment on this side of the building and no embellished cornice.

The interior of the 1906 telephone exchange contained a wide-open floor plan with wire conduits and cable vaults in the basement, the exchange frame room and operations office on the first floor, the operator switchboard stations on the second floor, and a rest area and dining room on the third floor. The public entry vestibule from the main doorway contains an elegant coved wood ceiling with elaborate moldings and wood paneling on the walls. Many of the original wood doors in the building are still in place. The 1906 stairway, which provided the first circulation route to the various floors, is located just through the main doorway in the southwest corner of the original building. The stairway connecting each floor consists of three runs of iron steps turning three times up to a large landing. The original railings and newel posts are in place and contain decorative floral patterns that were repeated elsewhere in the building's decorative program. Attached to the east side of the stairway an elevator provided additional vertical circulation.

A north-south corridor runs just east of the elevator core. This corridor approximately 7 feet wide and extending about 20 feet south served as the connection to the new 1928 building addition. Built east of the exterior walls of the 1906 building this hallway has a separate roof on the first floor. Its hallway is illuminated by a series of double-hung, three-over-three windows on the east side set with flat jack arches that overlook the interior court. With the addition of this corridor some windows on the

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south side of the 1906 building were removed although remnants of the curved jack arches can be seen in the interior court. Proceeding from this corridor to the north another hallway is reached. This one continues east approximately 60 feet with double hung, two-over-two windows along the interior court. Originally this area of the building contained a wide-open plan, which was later converted into a library and two classrooms when the building was adaptively re-used as a school. In the north section of the building on the second story, the floor space contained the switching terminals, and correspondingly the windows are located at a slightly higher level in order to allow light to filter in above the switchboards and operators; this space on the second floor was converted into three classrooms. Throughout the interior, the large windows contain wood surrounds with slightly projecting lower sills. The third floor in this section originally contained a lounge or rest room with a fireplace that operators used while taking their breaks. The fireplace and mantelpiece are no longer in place; the rest room's beamed ceiling and the original fixtures in the adjacent bathroom are still in place.

Continuing east along the east-west corridor the rear 1913 section of the building is reached. This section also had an open floor plan that is still in place on the third floor. With this addition, a secondary vertical circulation pattern was established with another staircase. The staircase encompasses the space overlooking the interior court on the west side of the 1913 addition. The windows on the stairway are double hung, two-over-two and three-over-three windows. This stairway and supplementary hallway served to connect the 1906 section of the building with the later 1948 section.

On the south side of the interior court a fourth corridor provides the final link in the circulation system. This corridor approximately 7 feet wide and 30 feet long unites the north-south corridor from the western side of the interior court with the stair and hallway of the eastern side of the court. In this area of the building the first and second floor space was divided into three main classrooms on both the first and second floors. As with the others, this corridor contains double hung three-over-three windows that are on the north side of the corridor. These windows unlike most in the building do not have elaborate wood surrounds, but are just set in the brick walls.

In the 1960s, when the exchange was phased out, the building was adapted for use as the Wilhelm K. Roentgen Public School. It remained a public school into the 1990s when it was closed. In creating the public school many of the open areas were divided into smaller sections to serve as classrooms. The kitchen and lunchroom areas on the third floor and the fourth floor gymnasium still reflect the open character of the earlier floor plan; added to the building in 1913 these spaces originally accommodated additional switchboards. The basement still has in place major sections of conduit pipe and cable vaults that carried the telephone wire to the exchange's first floor frame and switchboards on the upper floors.



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Currently, the building is vacant and in a deteriorated, though structurally sound, condition. Most of the windows are still intact although some on the first floor have been boarded or bricked up for security. The building carefully delineates the various expansions and transitions that the phone company went through as well as the early intent to make these buildings fit in with the neighborhood. Even though the various expansions and the later adaptive re-use of the building brought changes to its architectural form, the building maintains a high degree of its original historic and architectural integrity and the various changes serve to highlight the expansion of technology and telephone service in the twentieth century as well as reflecting how major utilities adapted a civic style into their architecture. This civic form and utilitarian open plan was easily appropriated for use by the Chicago Public School Board. Plans are now being pursued to renovate the building.

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Designed by the Chicago architects Irving K. Pond (1857-1939) and Allen B. Pond (1858-1929) and constructed in 1906-1907, with major additions designed in 1913, 1928, and 1948 by Holabird & Roche, the Classical Revival style Kedzie Exchange of the Chicago Telephone Company meets National Register Criteria A and C. The building has local significance in the areas of communications, social history, and architecture. It is a representative example of the neighborhood telephone exchanges built in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century. Hiring, training, and retaining thousands of skilled switchboard operators proved central to the Chicago Telephone Company's efforts to build its business. Pond & Pond responded to this need by designing a novel workplace that they thought would be especially attractive to the largely female workforce. When architectural critic Russell Sturgis attacked the decorative character of one of Pond & Pond's exchange designs, Irving Pond defended his work arguing that the presence of the female employees doing stressful work necessitated the company's attention to beauty and social welfare. Pond illustrated the published defense of his work with both interior and exterior views of the Kedzie Exchange.<sup>1</sup> By building fine civic buildings in Chicago neighborhoods the telephone company and its architects also sought to win the confidence of the general public and of city officials who presided over the company's position as a publicly regulated, but privately owned, utility operating with a monopoly franchise. Pond & Pond helped establish key elements of the building type that later proliferated under the guidance of the Chicago architecture firm of Holabird & Roche. The Kedzie Exchange exemplifies the distinctive characteristics of its particular building type, the telephone exchange, and accounts for the building's Criterion C significance. The major 1913, 1928, and 1948 additions to the Kedzie Exchange, designed by the firm of Holabird & Roche, carefully respected the civic and aesthetic character of the Pond & Pond 1906 design. The additions preserved the integrity of the Pond & Pond design even as they addressed the expansive nature of the communications industry in the early twentieth century. Holabird & Roche's three and a half decades of architectural stewardship over the original Pond & Pond design extend the period of significance for architecture through 1948, the date of the last addition to the Kedzie Exchange. For communications the period of significance extends through 1950; this date is selected to correspond with the fifty-year cut-off date for regular National Register listing. For social history, the period of significance extends through the 1928 addition, which showed a continuing commitment social welfare vision captured in the design of the exterior and planning of the interior of the original building. In the 1960s changes in telephone technology and service permitted the telephone company to retire the Kedzie Exchange. The substantial civic nature of the building's architecture undoubtedly contributed to the decision of the Chicago School Board to adaptively re-use the building for the Wilhelm K. Roentgen Elementary School, a use that continued into the 1990s.

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Telephones were first introduced into Chicago in 1877. Over the next several decades telephone use expanded exponentially. In 1880 there were 2,971 telephones in service in Chicago; in 1890 there were 7,766; 1900—34,414; 1910—239,088; 1920—557,981. The success of the Chicago Telephone Company seemed a marvel of technological development. However, this technology did not unfold without the marshalling of massive human resources and talent. The telephone company ran copper lines from individual subscriber's phones to telephone poles and then into underground conduits and vaults that carried up to 600 lines in a single cable. These lines were all routed through the neighborhood telephone exchange, which served as the technological and human nerve center of the entire telephone system. For subscribers to make telephone calls they were required to call the operator at the local telephone exchange. Responding to a glowing light on the switchboard the operator had to field the call, contact the party being called, and then connect the two lines; or alternatively the operator had to call an operator at another exchange for connection with the party being called. As soon as the call terminated the operator had to manually disconnect the line. Every call had to be routed through distributing frames and switchboards at local telephone exchanges. Telephone operators were an absolutely essential part of the telephone system; they were put in place to guard against a calling bottleneck at the local exchange. The success of telephone technology in Chicago and elsewhere required thousands of trained and efficient operators who formed what historian Kenneth Lipartito characterizes as a "techno-labor" system.<sup>ii</sup> The communication system required not only novel jobs, like that of the operator, but also a novel architecture, the telephone exchange. As the system developed, the position and status of the operator influenced the architectural character of the telephone exchange.<sup>iii</sup>

The fact that telephone operators were almost exclusively women was a key to their influence on telephone exchange design. Quite early in the development of the telephone business, executives turned to women to fill the ranks of operators. The Victorian stereotype of "feminine" character as being patient, polite, gentle, respectful, careful, and helpful meant that it was assumed that women would be better suited than men to deal with often cranky and irritable telephone customers frustrated by the pitfalls of a new technology. The need for well honed communications skills and for working at fairly complex tasks meant that operators would be paid more than female domestics and factory operatives.<sup>iv</sup> It also meant that the women would be drawn from the educated middle-class or from the ranks of upwardly mobile working-class families. A particular public and corporate solicitousness concerning working conditions followed these particular women into the workplace. Moreover, the skilled nature and at times stressful conditions of their work meant that the telephone operators had to be trained by the telephone company that then, in

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CHICAGO TELEPHONE COMPANY KEDZIE EXCHANGE

turn, sought ways of retaining their trained employees. Operators did not reach peak productivity for three or four years, thus high turnover rates proved a special concern of the company.

The Chicago Telephone Company and other telephone companies around the country put in place a regimen of corporate paternalism. In 1903, Theodore Vail, president of American Telephone & Telegraph Company promised to provide customers with a "voice with a smile." He understood that the cooperation of the employees was absolutely necessary to implement such a promise of service and he charted a comprehensive welfare system of pension, sickness and disability benefits, and insurance.<sup>v</sup> An architectural component of this welfare policy toward women workers manifested itself in the design of neighborhood telephone exchanges.

Chicago's first telephone exchange opened in 1878 in rented space in a LaSalle Street building just north of Madison Street. In the early years the exchanges of the Chicago Telephone Company were located in rented space or in fairly simple utilitarian structures. The design approach changed in the 1890s and took on a more monumental civic aspect when the Chicago Telephone Company commissioned Daniel H. Burnham to design a series of exchanges for the company's expanding network. Having served as the supervising architect for the World's Columbian Exposition, Burnham stood in an ideal position to impart a civic aspect to the exchange building. This development proved particularly important given the Chicago Telephone Company's status as a privately owned, publicly regulated, monopoly franchise. The company appreciated that it needed to serve the public and win the favor of local city officials if its franchise was to be renewed. Moreover, the company understood that one way to increase business was to increase the desirability of Chicago as a place to live and work; attention to beautiful architecture, with its suggestion that Chicago could afford such embellishment, was one way that many residents and businesses tried to boost Chicago's fortunes.<sup>vi</sup> As technological buildings, which some people classified as factories, the telephone company also stood to benefit from cultivating the civic, as opposed to the industrial aspect, of the exchange building. The exchange building would undoubtedly meet with more ready acceptance in residential neighborhoods if it assumed a less industrial or utilitarian aspect. Burnham, as one of the leading proponents of the City Beautiful Movement, certainly appreciated the possibilities that a series of telephone exchanges held for civic embellishment of Chicago.

Burnham's Chicago Telephone Company exchanges took on a fairly definite form; they were generally two-story, classical style, brick buildings, entered through a pedimented doorway, and topped by heavy cornices, often decorated with medallions, swags, and corbeled brackets. Burnham's Chicago Telephone Company commissions included the Lake View, Englewood, Superior, Yards, Seeley, and, possibly, the Hyde Park exchanges. Of these buildings only the Yards Exchange, at 4122 S. Union, and the Superior Exchange, at 54 W. Chicago Avenue, are still standing

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The Yards Exchange, constructed in 1899, is among the most architecturally modest of the Burnham's designs for the Chicago Telephone Company. Its civic character was established primarily through the placement of massive keystones over the windows. Located in a wealthier North Side neighborhood, the Superior Exchange, constructed in 1899, is the most distinguished of the Burnham-designed exchanges to survive, though its exterior was recently sand-blasted.

For a few years in the early 1900s the Chicago Telephone Company turned to an in-house architect to design its exchanges. In 1902, Chauncey G. Hellick, the company's "chief draftsman," designed the two-story brick Canal Exchange at the northeast corner of Laflin and West 19<sup>th</sup> Street; in 1903 Hellick designed the two-story brick Austin Exchange at 415 N. Central. These designs followed the simple lines of Burnham's Yards Exchange, making effective use of stone keystones to establish the civic nature of the building. The façade of the Austin Exchange has been obscured in connection with its remodeling as a church. The Canal Exchange was substantially enlarged and is now used as a church; its basic simple civic character is still apparent.<sup>vii</sup>

Burnham's designs of the 1890s clearly staked out the broad civic outline of the neighborhood telephone exchange. There is no evidence that Burnham explored or developed the exchange as specifically gendered space or gave architectural form to the emerging social welfare policies of the telephone company. The exchanges designed by Pond & Pond were the first Chicago buildings recognized for their special attention to the welfare of the building's female workers. Pond & Pond, best known as the architects of Hull House and numerous other social clubs and settlements in Chicago, seemed ideally suited to push telephone exchange architecture beyond its civic dimensions into the realm of social welfare. Pond & Pond were also the first architects in Chicago to focus upon the special formal problems surrounding the constant need to physically expand telephone exchanges; they developed a provisional approach to design that gave the buildings an initial complete form even though they were conceived simply as the first phase of building.

After building the two-story Humboldt Exchange in 1904-1905, Pond & Pond developed a three-story telephone exchange model. The increase from two to three stories permitted a rigorous segregation of space by use and gender within the telephone exchange. The most notable addition was the design of third floor "rest" room and eating facilities for female operators. Pond & Pond's new exchange model placed telephone cable conduits and vaults in the basement and the telephone line distributing frames and local operations office on the first floor. Male employees occupied these two levels. The operator switchboard was located on the second floor in a broad, well-lit, open-floor plan. Switchboards lined the wall and windows above the switchboard and along the opposite wall illuminated the space. On the third floor Pond & Pond placed the operators' "rest" room and dining facilities. These third floor spaces became the focus of the company's efforts at

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CHICAGO TELEPHONE COMPANY KEDZIE EXCHANGE

attending to the social needs of their legions of female operators. Here, the space where operators took rest breaks stood in sharp contrast to the regimented lines of the switchboard floor. The third floor rest room had all the fitting of a women's social club. It was furnished with comfortable couches, rocking chairs, oriental carpets, and a fireplace. The room had reading material and a small library. The walls were lined with art and sculpture. A dining space where meals were available to operators was also located on the third floor.

Use of the third floor rest and dining area was a regular part of the operators' day. They worked for two hours at the switchboard and then took a fifteen-minute break. Then after another two hours at the switchboard the operators took a forty-five minute break. The afternoon again brought two, two-hour shifts with a fifteen-minute break in between.<sup>viii</sup> In the two-story Humboldt Exchange Pond & Pond did provide a rest room but it simply occupied the front section of the second floor, while the switchboard filled the rear part of the floor. What the three-story model did was introduce a more thoroughgoing specialization of the space within the exchange, throwing into greater prominence the movement toward creating a more humane workplace.

Efforts to address the welfare of women workers appeared in the design of building exterior: as well as in the program and design of exchange interiors. In the Kedzie Exchange, 1906-1907, Edgewater Exchange, 1906-1907, and in the Lincoln Exchange, 1907, Pond & Pond extended sills of the windows outside of the operators rest rooms to accommodate flower boxes, an element that Irving Pond insisted was a "common, almost general, feature of the buildings." They also placed floral motifs in the stair moldings. More generally, the architects designed handsomely ornamented exteriors. It was precisely this aspect of the design that ran afoul of the modernist critical standards of Russell Sturgis. Sturgis insisted that the embellished exterior of a Pond & Pond exchange and the use of historical architectural motifs violated the modern imperative for utility and simplicity in the design of "factories and warehouses." This characterization of the exchange as a factory or warehouse brought the sharpest retort from Irving Pond; it seemed to overlook the social welfare aspect of the female operators' spaces. Pond wrote,

It is not so easy to tell just how far to carry ornamentation in any kind of a structure, utilitarian or otherwise. But the telephone exchange partakes of the nature of an office (in no sense a shop or factory) building and of club of girls, and such being the case I do not believe ornament or the element of beauty and domesticity are liked to be carried to a fatal extreme. It is not the function of the play of color or of the bits of caring about the entrances or of the bright flowers on the window ledges to command "Abandon hope all who enter here"; but rather the function is to invite to labor: "Come, work, rest, recreate and work again amid pleasant surroundings, and enjoy at least a bit of the

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beauty to which your work entitles you." From what we know of the highly wrought nerves of many of the telephone users . . . there is wisdom in providing for the operators these havens of rest in its telephone exchanges.<sup>ix</sup>

The design of the exchange, part technological hub, part civic embellishment, part club, and part "haven" was at the center of the new approach to the problem that Pond & Pond developed for the Chicago Telephone Company.

Besides building new exchanges, Pond & Pond also completed additions to the Englewood, Monroe, Canal, and Yards exchanges in 1906. The buildings that received the additions were only a matter of a few years old. This work clarified for Pond & Pond that any plans they made for new exchanges were at best contingent and provisional. The firm responded by actually anticipating later additions in the design and structure of their exchanges. Irving Pond declared that the firm knew that none of their buildings would remain the same; as initially completed they were "but a fragment of the design." Rather, Pond & Pond sought "to design the structure that addition and enlargement may be made with the least amount of alteration in or destruction of the existing portion, and to the end that the building may not present too unfinished an appearance in its temporary condition."<sup>x</sup> At the Kedzie Exchange the piers between bays were clearly designed anticipating that with the addition of floors the piers would become colossal order pilasters. Burnham's exchange designs had lacked any such provision for additions. When Holabird & Roche later became the Chicago Telephone Company's primary architect they followed the model established by Pond & Pond of planning and building flexibly in anticipation of future additions. This approach to design represented another area of innovation that came from the Pond & Pond commissions for the Chicago Telephone Company.

The attention to women's social welfare and to design flexibility in no way deflected Pond & Pond from extending the basic civic identity that Burnham had given to the earlier exchanges. In fact the period of 1905 to 1907 when Pond & Pond executed their exchanges were particularly turbulent times for the Chicago Telephone Company. The Illinois Supreme Court, for example, ordered the company to refund money that it had overcharged its customers for toll calls. In the wake of the ruling the *Economist* reported the city's "movements against the company . . . have been anything but friendly."<sup>xi</sup> This came at the same time that city council negotiations opened about the twenty-year extension of the company's franchise, due to expire in 1909. One aspect of the franchise discussion was a call for a reduction in rates, greater regulation, and a provision that the city itself would have the option of buying the telephone company after a number of years. In 1904 the telephone committee of the City Club of Chicago supported the notion that the telephone business was a "natural monopoly;" but it balked at recommending a franchise renewal for the

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Chicago Telephone Company without a careful scrutiny of competing proposals.<sup>xii</sup> The Chicago Telephone Company countered this with an aggressive public relations and lobbying campaign. When telephone exchanges were “cut-over” the telephone company arranged special dedication ceremonies with distinguished local residents and city officials. The buildings themselves served as part of the public relations campaigns; the public was always invited to visit the local exchange. The rest rooms were featured; treating women operators well fit the broader strategy of building favorable public sentiment while at the same time holding onto trained and valued employees in an industry that had quite high rates of turnover.<sup>xiii</sup>

Pond & Pond worked for the Chicago Telephone Company for a relatively short time. The Holabird firm designed telephone exchanges for close to forty years. Nevertheless, Pond & Pond did work of great interest that established the broad outlines of design solution that influenced numerous subsequent designs. The care with which the Holabird firm expanded the Kedzie Exchange in 1913 and in 1928, first by adding a floor and later by substantially expanding the front façade, suggests something of the aesthetic importance of the model that Pond & Pond established in 1906. Holabird & Roche worked to line up key elements of the façade and to carefully integrate the addition. The character of the original design is readily apparent on the exterior, and the integration of later additions worked along many of the lines that Pond & Pond initially anticipated. The Kedzie Exchange nicely anticipates Holabird & Roche’s later Chicago Telephone Company exchanges. When Holabird & Roche’s new Hyde Park Exchange was completed in 1915 its plan, layout, and spatial segregation were described as typical—but it followed the model established earlier by Pond & Pond.<sup>xiv</sup> Although many of the Holabird & Roche exchanges were larger and more monumental than the Pond & Pond buildings they did not fundamentally alter the model that Pond & Pond had introduced to Chicago. Embellished exteriors, with a civic aspect, rest rooms for the operators, and the careful specialization of spaces in the buildings were hallmarks of the later buildings.

Major exchanges that Pond & Pond designed in Chicago have been demolished, including the Lincoln, Oakland, and Drexel exchanges. Unfortunately, the Holabird & Roche additions to Pond & Pond’s Humboldt Exchange, located at 1513 N. Western Avenue, were not as sympathetic as the additions to the Kedzie Exchange; the additions, for example, involved the demolition of the highly embellished original entrance that had provoked Sturgis’s critical ire. Besides the Kedzie and Humboldt exchanges only Pond & Pond’s Edgewater Exchange has survived to the present. The Edgewater Exchange at 1470-1472 Carmen Avenue, had two additional stories added by Holabird & Roche and has been converted into a hospital. Since Holabird & Roche designed a major new Edgewater Exchange in the 1920s a few blocks away, the Pond & Pond design lacks the longer history of addition and its parts are not as readily apparent as they are in the Kedzie



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Exchange; the L-shaped plan, for example, with the narrower rear wing, designed to permit abundant light in the switchboard area is not evident in the Edgewater Exchange. The Kedzie Exchange is not only a good example of its type it is the best preserved building to survive from the series innovative exchange designs undertaken by the firm of Pond & Pond.

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Endnotes:

- <sup>i</sup> Irving K. Pond, "The Telephone Exchange," Architectural Record, 24 (October, 1908): 259-276; Russell Sturgis, "Factories and Warehouses," Architectural Record, 19 (May 1906): 368-375.
- <sup>ii</sup> Kenneth Lipartito, "When Women Were Switches: Technology, Work, and Gender in the Telephone Industry, 1890-1920," American Historical Review, 99 (October, 1994): 1074-1111.
- <sup>iii</sup> For an excellent account of the telephone system from the time of the construction of the Kedzie Exchange, see S. J. Larned, "The Telephone Exchange," The World To-Day, 13 (July 1907): 685-692; see also Illinois Bell Telephone Company, A Golden Anniversary 1878-1928, The Story of Fifty Years of the Bell Telephone in Chicago, (Chicago: Illinois Bell Telephone Company, 1928).
- <sup>iv</sup> Marjorie Levine, "'A Kind of Human Machine,' Women's Work at the Switchboard," Palimpsest, 74 (Spring, 1993): 3-13; Lipartito, "When Women Were Switches," 1084-1085; Michele Martin, "Feminization of the Labour Process in the Communications Industry: The Case of the Telephone Operators, 1876-1936," Labour, 22 (Fall, 1988): 139-162.
- <sup>v</sup> See Andrea Tone, The Business of Benevolence. Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 33, 143.
- <sup>vi</sup> For an insightful discussion of the civic aspects of Holabird & Roche's later designs for the Chicago Telephone Company, see Robert Bruegmann, The Architects and the City. Holabird & Roche of Chicago, 1880-1918, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 415-430.
- <sup>vii</sup> This information is reconstructed from research in Chicago building permit records and from site visits; see also, Charles Moore, Daniel H. Burnham: Architect, Planner of Cities, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1921), 211.
- <sup>viii</sup> See Sylvester Baxter, "The Telephone Girl," The Outlook, 83 (26 May 1906): 231-239.
- <sup>ix</sup> Irving K. Pond, "The Telephone Exchange," Architectural Record, 24 (October, 1908): 263.
- <sup>x</sup> Ibid., 260-261.
- <sup>xi</sup> "Chicago Telephone," Economist, 35 (24 February 1906): 395.
- <sup>xii</sup> See City Club of Chicago, Special Report of the Telephone Committee of the City Club of Chicago, (Chicago: City Club of Chicago, 1904).
- <sup>xiii</sup> The architecture worked along similar lines as the development of a special medical department in the telephone company that aimed to blunt the critique of the poor working conditions and the inefficiency of high rates of turn-over; see, Jill E. Cooper, "Keeping the Girls on the Line: The Medical Department and Women Workers at AT & T, 1913-1940," Pennsylvania History, 64 (Autumn, 1997): 490-508.
- <sup>xiv</sup> "New Hyde Park Office Almost Completed," Bell Telephone News, 5 (September, 1915): 2.

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CHICAGO TELEPHONE COMPANY KEDZIE EXCHANGE

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Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, 415-430.

Cooper, Jill E. "Keeping the Girls on the Line: The Medical Department and Women Workers at AT & T, 1913-1940." Pennsylvania History 64 (Autumn, 1997): 490-508.

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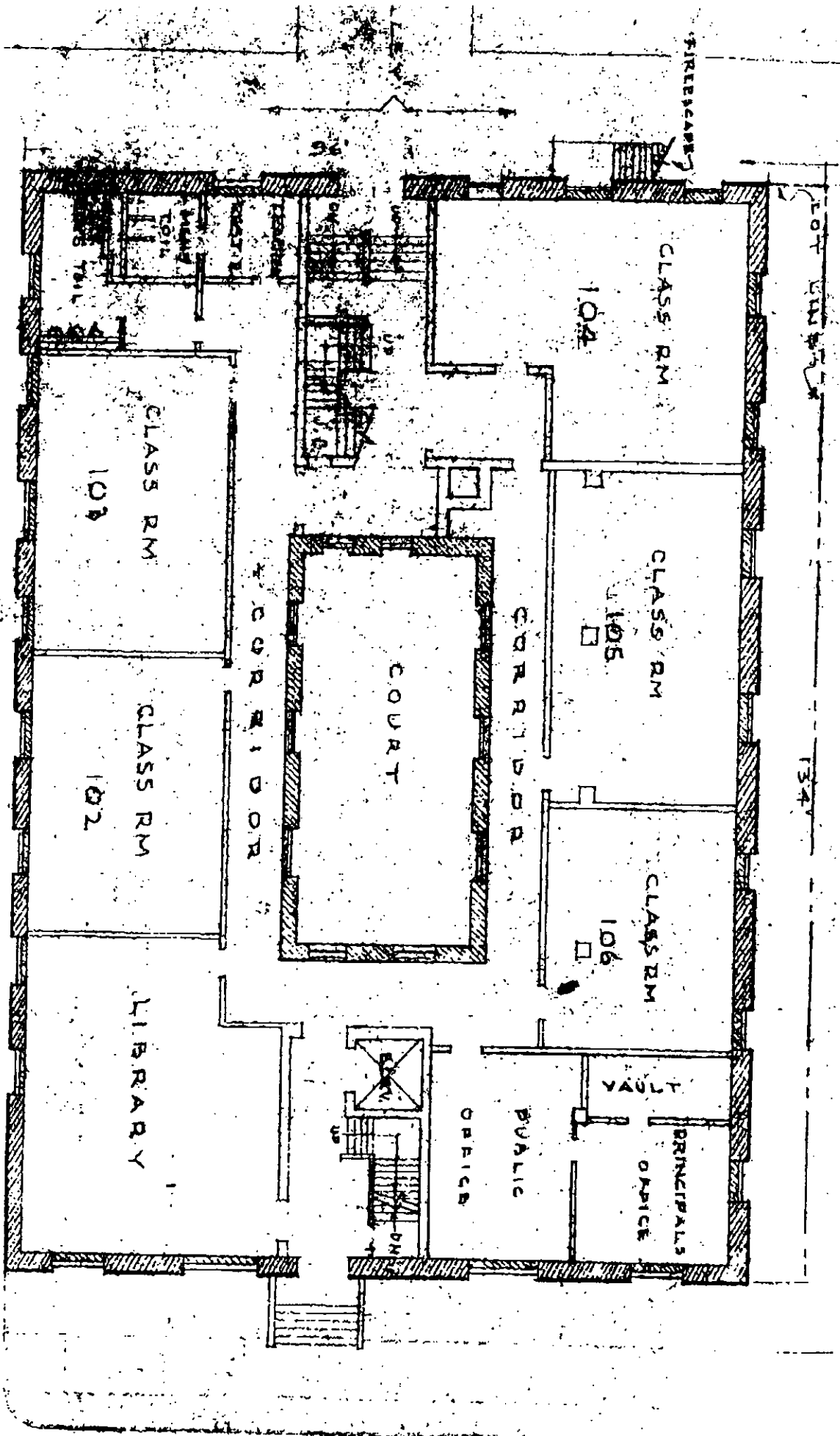
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Verbal Boundary Description: Lots 13,14, and 15 in Drury's Addition to Chicago, Section 12-39-13.

Boundary Justification: The boundary encompasses the lots historically associated with the telephone company building.



FIRST FLOOR &  
PLOT PLAN

SCALE 1/8" = 1'

LOT DIM 134'

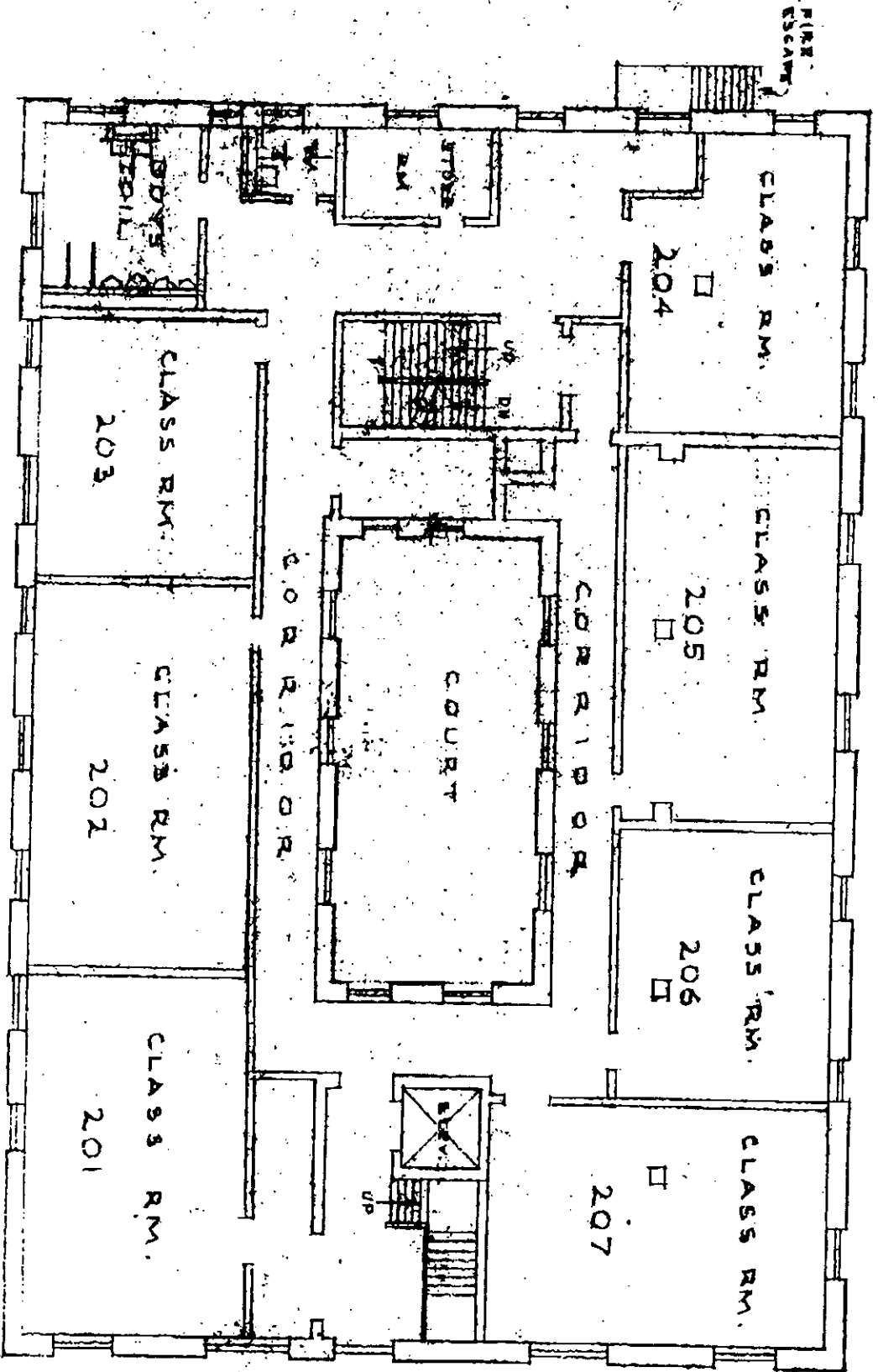
134'

50. HOMAN AVE

24-63 A.M.S

Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange  
Chicago, Illinois  
First Floor Plan - 1960s

WILHELM K. [REDACTED]  
VOC. GUIDANCE & EDUCATION CTR.  
15 SO. HOMAN AVE.  
SAUL SAMUELS - DIRECTOR BUREAU OF ARCHITECTURE

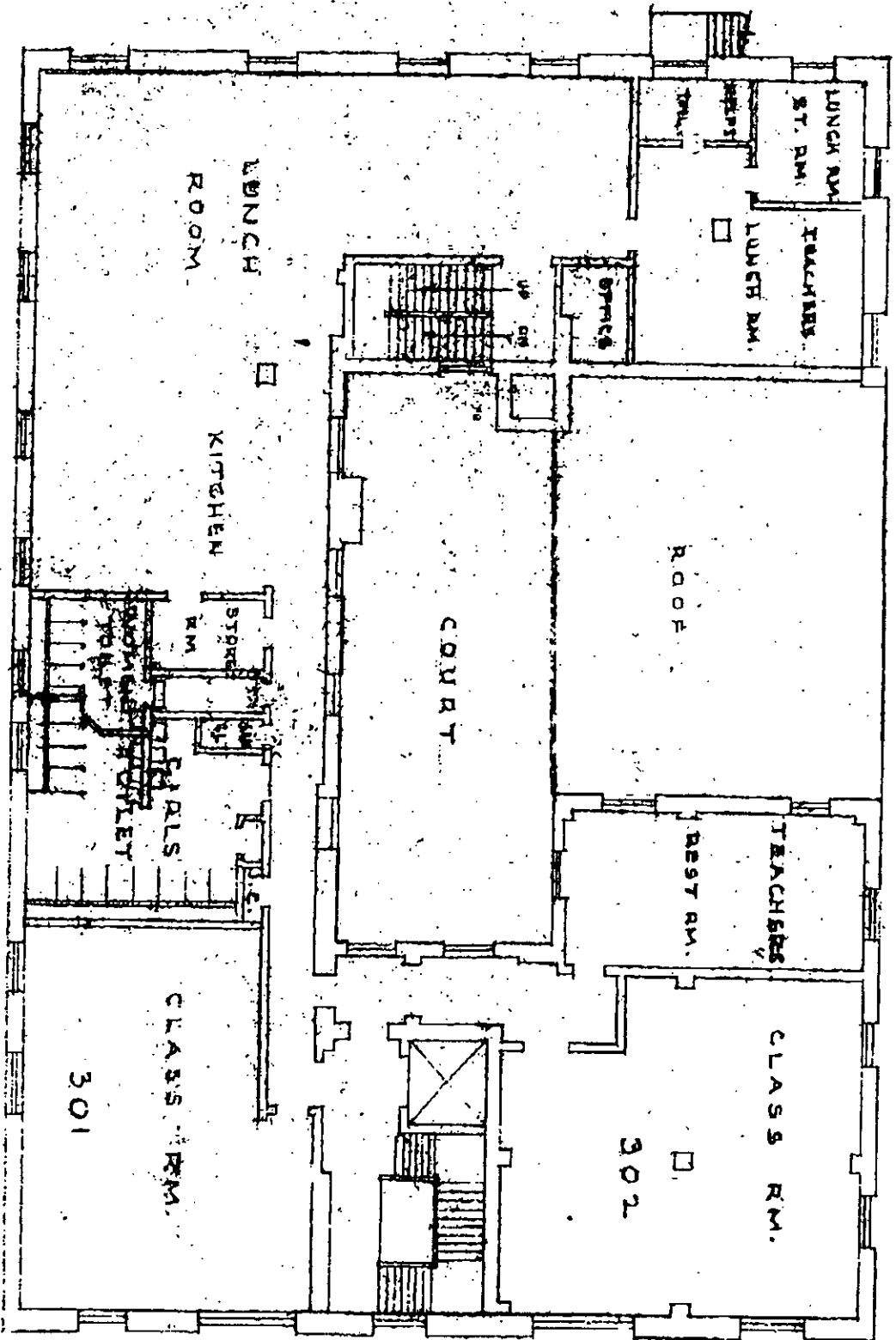


**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange  
 Chicago, Illinois  
 Second Floor Plan - 1960s

**WILHELM K. ROENTGEN**  
 VOC. GUIDANCE & EDUCATION CTR.  
 15 SO. HOMAN AVE.

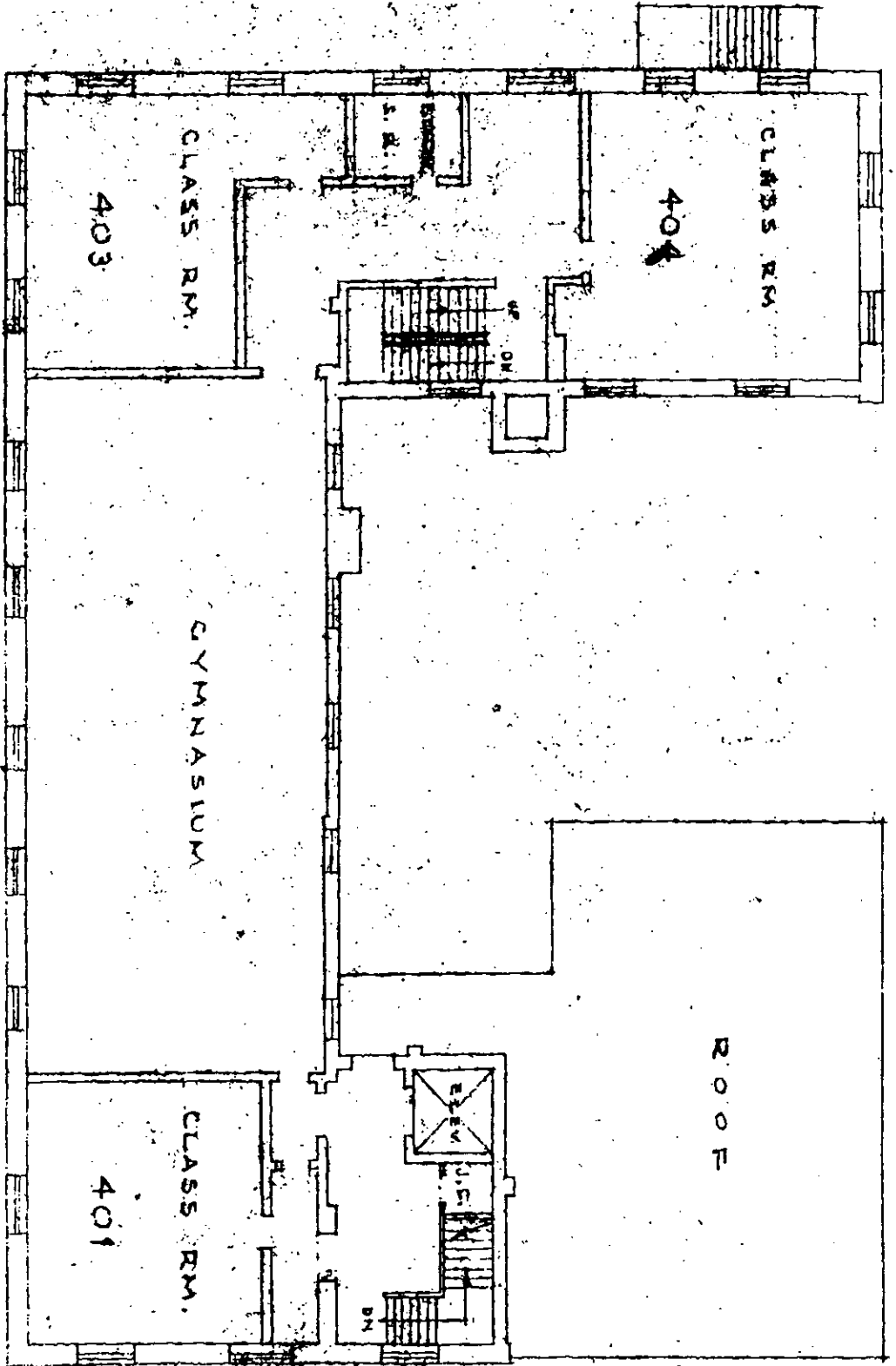


THIRD FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Chicago Telephone Company Keedzie Exchange  
 Chicago, Illinois  
 Third Floor Plan - 1960s

WILHELM K. ROENTGEN  
 VOC. GUIDANCE & EDUCATION CTR.  
 19. 301. HOMAN AVE.



# FOURTH FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

Chicago Telephone Company Keddzie Exchange  
 Chicago, Illinois  
 Fourth Floor Plan - 1960s

WILHELM K. ROENTGEN  
 VOC. GUIDANCE & EDUCATION CTR  
 15 SO. HDYMAN AVE.





# United States Department of the Interior

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JUN 15 2001

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JUN 8 2001

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 5/28/01 THROUGH 6/01/01

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

ARIZONA, MARICOPA COUNTY, Phoenix Indian School Historic District, 300 E. Indian School Rd., Phoenix, 01000521, LISTED, 5/31/01

ARIZONA, PINAL COUNTY, Grewe Site, Address Restricted, Coolidge vicinity, 01000565, LISTED, 5/30/01

CALIFORNIA, PLACER COUNTY, Woman's Club of Lincoln, 499 E St., Lincoln, 01000331, LISTED, 5/30/01

FLORIDA, BAY COUNTY, SS Tarpon (Shipwreck), 7.8 nautical mi. offshore Panama City, Panama City vicinity, 01000527, LISTED, 5/31/01

FLORIDA, BROWARD COUNTY, SS COPENHAGEN (shipwreck), Pompano Drop-Off S of Hillsboro Inlet, Pompano Beach vicinity, 01000532, LISTED, 5/31/01

FLORIDA, DADE COUNTY, HALF MOON (shipwreck), Outside Bear Cut off Key Biscayne, Miami vicinity, 01000531, LISTED, 5/31/01

FLORIDA, DIXIE COUNTY, CITY OF HAWKINSVILLE (shipwreck), Suwannee R. 100 yds S of Old Town RR trestle, Old Town vicinity, 01000533, LISTED, 5/31/01

FLORIDA, ESCAMBA COUNTY, USS MASSACHUSETTS--BB-2 (shipwreck), 1. mi. SSW of Pensacola Pass, Pensacola, 01000526, LISTED, 5/31/01

FLORIDA, MONROE COUNTY, SAN PEDRO (shipwreck), 1.25 mi. S of Indian Keys, Islamorada vicinity, 01000530, LISTED, 5/31/01

FLORIDA, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, URCA DE LIMA (shipwreck), 200 yds offshore Jack Island Park, N of Ft. Pierce Inlet, Ft. Pierce vicinity, 01000529, LISTED, 5/31/01

IDAHO, BONNER COUNTY, Olson, Charles A. and Mary, House, 401 Church St., Sandpoint, 01000566, LISTED, 5/30/01

IDAHO, MINIDOKA COUNTY, Empire School, 300 South 50 East, Rupert vicinity, 01000568, LISTED, 5/30/01 (Public School Buildings in Idaho MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Chicago Telephone Company Kedzie Exchange, 17 S. Homan Ave., Chicago, 01000594, LISTED, 5/30/01

ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Lake Forest Cemetery, 1525 N. Lake Rd., Lake Forest, 01000597, LISTED, 5/30/01

ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Paddock, Henry I., House, 346 Sheridan Rd., Winthrop Harbor, 01000596, LISTED, 5/30/01

ILLINOIS, MARION COUNTY, Bachmann, Charles and Naomi, House, 401 S. Walnut St., Salem, 01000598, LISTED, 5/30/01

ILLINOIS, RANDOLPH COUNTY, Piney Creek Site, Address Restricted, Campbell Hill vicinity, 01000601, LISTED, 5/31/01 (Native American Rock Art Sites of Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, RANDOLPH COUNTY, Piney Creek South Site, Address Restricted, Campbell Hill vicinity, 01000602, LISTED, 5/31/01 (Native American Rock Art Sites of Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, RANDOLPH COUNTY, Piney Creek West Site, Address Restricted, Campbell Hill vicinity, 01000600, LISTED, 5/31/01 (Native American Rock Art Sites of Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, RANDOLPH COUNTY, Tegtmeier Site, Address Restricted, Campbell Hill vicinity, 01000599, LISTED, 5/31/01 (Native American Rock Art Sites of Illinois MPS)

KENTUCKY, GREENUP COUNTY, General U.S. Grant Bridge, Ohio R.-Chillicothe and Second St., South Portsmouth, 01000560, LISTED, 5/31/01

LOUISIANA, ST. JAMES PARISH, Mather House, 5666 LA 44, Convent vicinity, 01000569, LISTED, 5/30/01 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)

MICHIGAN, MASON COUNTY, Scottville School, 209 N. Main St., Scottville, 01000571, LISTED, 5/30/01

MICHIGAN, WAYNE COUNTY, New Amsterdam Historic District, 435, 450 Amstersam;440, 41-47 Burroughs;5911-5919, 6050-6160 Cass; 6100-6200 Second; 425 York, Detroit, 01000570, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, ALBANY COUNTY, Newtonville United Methodist Church, Loudon Rd. at Maxwell Rd., Colonie, 01000580, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, ALBANY COUNTY, Van Derheyden House, 823 Delaware Ave., Delmar, 01000582, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, DELAWARE COUNTY, Skene Memorial Library, Main St.--Old NY 28, Fleischmanns, 01000576, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, SCHOHARIE COUNTY, Gallupville Methodist Church, Factory St., Schoharie vicinity, 01000584, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, SENECA COUNTY, Wilson, Aaron, House, 2037 Wilson Rd., Ovid, 01000577, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY, Childwold Memorial Presbyterian Church, Bancroft Rd., Piercefild, 01000585, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, STEUBEN COUNTY, St. Ann's Federation Building, 38 Broadway, Hornell, 01000552, LISTED, 5/29/01

NEW YORK, SULLIVAN COUNTY, First Methodist Episcopal Church of Parksville, 10 Short Ave., Parksville, 01000575, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, SULLIVAN COUNTY, Hebrew Congregation of Mountaindale Synagogue, NY 55, Mountaindale, 01000578, LISTED, 5/30/01

NEW YORK, ULSTER COUNTY, Jenkins--DuBois Farm and Mill Site, Jenkinstown Rd., Gardiner, 01000581, LISTED, 5/30/01

NORTH DAKOTA, WALSH COUNTY, State Bank of Edinburg, 300 Main Ave., Edinburg, 01000588, LISTED, 5/30/01

OHIO, CLERMONT COUNTY, Harmony Hill Dairy House, 299 S. Third St., Williamsburg, 01000592, LISTED, 5/30/01

OHIO, COLUMBIANA COUNTY, Diamond Historic District, Market and E. Sixth Sts., East Liverpool, 85003506, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 5/30/01 (East Liverpool Central Business District MRA)